

## Remarks

Claims 35-46 are pending and rejected. Claims 35-46 are cancelled by this amendment. Claims 47-66 are added by this amendment. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 47-66.

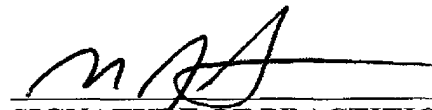
Claims 41-42 and 44-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over U.S. patent 5,600,648 (Furuta). Claims 41-42 and 44-45 are cancelled. In new claims 47-66, a secondary signal is received that has overhead and payload. This overhead and payload are combined with the overhead and payload of a primary signal. To combine the overhead, unused space in primary overhead is located, and the secondary overhead is inserted into the unused primary overhead space. After signal transfer, the inserted secondary overhead and payload are removed and combined to reform the received secondary signal. Furuta does not teach these aspects.

Claims 35-40, 43, and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. patent 5,600,648 (Furuta) in view of U.S. patent 5,416,768 (Jahromi). Claims 35-40, 43, and 46 are cancelled. In new claims 47-66, a secondary signal is received that has overhead and payload. This overhead and payload are combined with the overhead and payload of a primary signal. To combine the overhead, unused space in primary overhead is located, and the secondary overhead is inserted into the unused primary overhead space. After signal transfer, the inserted secondary overhead and payload are removed and combined to reform the received secondary signal. Furuta and Jahromi do not teach these aspects.

Applicants submit that there are numerous additional reasons in support of patentability, but that such reasons are moot in light of the above remarks and are omitted in the interests of brevity. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 47-66.

The Applicant believes no additional fees are due with respect to this filing. However, should the Office determine additional fees are necessary, the Office is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 210765.

Respectfully submitted,



**SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER**

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